

## A new subspecies of *Margarops fuscus* (Scaly-breasted Thrasher) from St. Vincent, Lesser Antilles

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Recently, Buden (1993) described geographic variation in *Margarops fuscus* (Scaly-breasted Thrasher, Mimidae), a species endemic to the larger islands in the Lesser Antilles. *Margarops fuscus* previously was placed in the monotypic genus *Allenia* (initially placed there by Cory 1891), but was merged by Bond (1959) into *Margarops*, another genus endemic to the West Indies. This merger was adopted by the American Ornithologists' Union (1983). Surprisingly, given the extent of intraspecific variation present in most West Indian bird species, *M. fuscus* had been considered monotypic from Cory (1891) until Buden (1993). Buden named three new subspecies of *M. fuscus*: a northern subspecies (*M. f. hypenemus*) from Saba and Barbuda south to Guadeloupe and Marie-Galante; a subspecies restricted to St. Lucia (*M. f. schwartzi*), and a subspecies restricted to Barbados (*M. f. atlanticus*). The nominate subspecies thus was considered to occur on the remaining larger islands in the Lesser Antilles, with populations both north of St. Lucia on Dominica and Martinique, and populations south of St. Lucia, on St. Vincent and Grenada.

Recently, the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science (LSUMZ) purchased the privately held collection of Albert Schwartz, who collected over 6000 bird specimens from throughout the West Indies during the 1950s and 1960s. While identifying and curating specimens from the Schwartz collection into the LSUMZ, Kratter was struck by plumage differences between *Margarops fuscus* specimens from St. Vincent and those from other islands in the Lesser Antilles. With further analysis of specimens from other institutions (see Acknowledgements), we propose to name this distinct taxon:

### ***Margarops fuscus vincenti* subsp. nov.**

*Holotype*. Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science (LSUMZ) no. 142651; a male collected, and presumably prepared, by D. C. Leber on 14 March 1961 at Lourt, St. Andrew Par., St. Vincent. The original specimen number is 1727.

*Description of holotype*. Capitalized colour names are from Ridgway (1912). Crown, nape, mantle, rump, scapulars, and auriculars Sepia, the lores slightly darker. Upper tail coverts Mummy Brown. Ground colour of chin and throat Bister, the extreme tips of some central feathers whitish. Ground colour of upper and middle breast Saccardo's Brown, the feathers tipped whitish (c. 1 mm), imparting a scalloped appearance. Central lower breast and central belly feathers whitish, with wide (3–4 mm) Saccardo's Brown subterminal edges and wide

TABLE 1

Extent of white on rectrix no. 6 in subspecies of *Margarops fuscus*, measured from the tail feather tip to the proximal extent of white on the inner web (measured midway between rachis and feather edge). Individuals with extremely worn, highly abraded, or moulting tail feathers were omitted. *M. f. atlanticus* was not available for this analysis. The one-way Analysis of Variance was significant ( $F=39.13$ ,  $P<0.0001$ ). All possible Scheffe's post-ANOVA contrasts were significant ( $P<0.05$ ). Measurements taken by Kratter on LSUMZ specimens.

	<i>n</i>	mean (mm)	s.d.
<i>M. f. hypenemus</i>	21	15.5	2.2
<i>M. f. fuscus</i>	24	13.6	1.4
<i>M. f. vincenti</i>	6	11.1	1.7
<i>M. f. schwartzi</i>	18	18.8	2.0

(*c.* 4 mm) whitish tips. Flanks Snuff Brown, the feathers with buffy edges. Under tail coverts white, with large Sepia spots. Dorsal surfaces of remiges and rectrices somewhat darker than upperparts. The innermost two tertials have small (*c.* 1 mm) white feather edges. The greater wing coverts have small (<1 mm) whitish edges to the feathers. All but the innermost rectrix (no. 1) are edged whitish, with the white extending further on the inner webs than on the outer webs. The white edges are largest on the outermost rectrices (9 mm along shaft on inner web of rectrix no. 6; only 6 mm on outer web), and progressively decrease to a 1 mm white edge on inner web of rectrix no. 2. Measurements: exposed culmen 17.0 mm; wing chord 120.1 mm; tail 93.5 mm; and tarsus 26.9 mm.

*Diagnosis.* Underparts darker than other subspecies of *M. fuscus*, particularly on chin and throat. This relative darkness results from fewer feathers with white edges, smaller white edgings to those feathers with pale edges, and a slightly darker brown ground colour. The subterminal brown spots on the flanks are larger and darker than other races. The white feather edgings on the under tail coverts are smaller than other races. The extent of white tips on the outer tail feathers of *M. f. vincenti* is less than that found on *M. f. hypenemus*, *schwartzi*, or *fuscus* (Table 1); these differences were significant between *vincenti* and each of these other subspecies (Table 1), and there was no overlap in this character between *vincenti* ( $n=6$ ) and either *hypenemus* ( $n=21$ ) or *schwartzi* ( $n=18$ ). The back of *M. f. vincenti* is less rufescent than *M. f. atlanticus*.

*Distribution.* Restricted to the island of St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles.

*Paratypes.* Three other specimens were collected by A. Schwartz at the type locale in 1961: LSUMZ no. 142650, female, 9 March; LSUMZ no. 142652, male, 26 December; and LSUMZ no. 142653, male, 29 December. Two other specimens were collected by D. Leber 3 mi. NW Rabacca, Charloote Parish, St. Vincent, in 1961: LSUMZ no. 142654, female, 15 March, collected by D. C. Leber and LSUMZ

no. 142655, male, 15 March, collected by D. C. Leber. The paratypes agree with the holotype, except as follows: LSUMZ 142652, a fresher-plumaged bird, has more white on the belly, the breast and lower throat feathers have slightly larger white edgings, and the tertials have larger white edges. The brown coloration throughout is slightly darker. LSUMZ 142653 and 142655 have more white in the belly and larger white edges on the tertials.

*Etymology.* This taxon is named *vincenti* after its restricted distribution on the island of St. Vincent.

*Commentary.* Apart from the plumage distinctions mentioned above, *M. fuscus vincenti* differs morphologically from other subspecies. Except for the large subspecies in the northern Lesser Antilles (see Buden 1993), however, these differences tend to be slight, and overlap among subspecies is great. Garrido measured four mensural characters (wing chord, tail length, exposed culmen, and tarsus length) of skin specimens (see Acknowledgements) from throughout the distribution of *M. fuscus*. Populations of the northern *M. f. hypenemus* were larger than all other populations in all four measures (Table 2), as Buden (1993) pointed out. *Margarops f. hypenemus* showed little or no overlap in these characters with *vincenti*. Our measurements of wing, tail, and tarsus in *vincenti* tended to be slightly larger than those of the nominate subspecies (Table 2), but overlap was high. The nearest populations of the nominate subspecies to St. Vincent are approximately 120 km north on Martinique, 200 km north on Dominica, and 110 km south on Grenada. The nearest population to *M. f. vincenti*, however, is on St. Lucia, approximately 50 km north. The only morphological difference consistent in both sexes between this population, which alone makes up *M. f. schwartzi*, and *vincenti* was the longer bill in the former (Table 2). Our sample from the population of Barbados (*M. f. atlanticus*), approximately 160 km east of St. Vincent, was too small ( $n=1$  for both sexes) to draw conclusions from morphometric analyses.

Our data largely agree with Buden's (1993) analysis of geographic variation in this species. He mentioned (p. 80) the darker ventral coloration of specimens from St. Vincent, but apparently did not consider the differences sufficient for taxonomic recognition. His specimens from the northern Lesser Antillean islands are largest in wing chord, which, in his diagnosis, is the sole distinction separating *hypenemus* from the nominate subspecies. However, our measures of wing chord on individuals from Antigua (Table 2), considered by Buden to belong to the long-winged *hypenemus*, do not agree with his data (1993, Table 1). Our measures for wing chord of the Antigua population fall within the range given for the nominate form. Our data agree with the unpublished data of W. C. Arendt and J. Faaborg, who measured live birds on most islands within this species' distribution. With a limited sample ( $n=2$ ), they found wing chord lengths of 116 and 118 mm, closer to the means of 117 and 119 mm that we found for males and females, respectively (Table 2), than to the means of 125.4 and 125.5 found by Buden (1993) for males and females, respectively. Although this suggests that the Antigua population may more

TABLE 2

Measurements of *Margarops fuscus* specimens by island and, for subspecies found on more than one island, by subspecies. For subspecies, means were calculated using island mean values (for those available) as individual samples. Antigua is omitted for mean values of *M. f. hypenemus* (see text). Mean, standard deviation and sample sizes (in parentheses) are given. Measurements taken by Garrido.

Subspecies	Island	Sex	Wing (mm) mean, s.d. (n)	Tail (mm) mean, s.d. (n)	Bill (mm) mean, s.d. (n)	Tarsus (mm) mean, s.d. (n)
<i>M. f. hypenemus</i>	Saba	M	124, 3.3 (5)	100, 2.0 (5)	18.0, 1.0 (5)	30.2, 0.7 (5)
		F	124, 1.0 (3)	103, 1.0 (3)	19.6, 0.6 (3)	31.2, 0.6 (3)
	St. Eustatius	M	—	100, 3.3 (5)	18.0, 0.9 (5)	30.0, 1.4 (5)
		F	—	—	—	—
	St. Kitts	M	125, 3.3 (8)	100, 3.5 (9)	19.0, 1.7 (8)	30.0, 0.7 (9)
		F	125, 2.4 (9)	100, 3.4 (8)	19.0, 1.2 (9)	31.0, 0.6 (8)
	Nevis	M	125, 1.5 (4)	103, 4.0 (4)	18.7, 0.5 (4)	30.0, 1.1 (4)
		F	125, 1.4 (2)	101, 1.4 (2)	19.5, 0.7 (2)	30.5, 0.6 (2)
	Barbuda	M	—	—	—	—
		F	128 (1)	112, 0.7 (2)	17.6, 0.0 (2)	29.6, 0.7 (2)
	Antigua	M	117, 2.9 (3)	102, 1.2 (5)	18.0, 0.7 (6)	30.5, 1.3 (6)
		F	119, 3.5 (2)	98, 2.3 (4)	17.6, 1.2 (4)	30.2, 1.7 (4)
	Montserrat	M	124, 0.6 (3)	102, 1.5 (3)	19.6, 1.2 (3)	31.0, 0.7 (3)
		F	125, 1.8 (2)	100, 5.7 (2)	18.0, 1.8 (2)	29.4, 0.8 (2)
	Guadeloupe	M	—	94, 8.5 (2)	—	—
		F	—	96, 6.0 (4)	17.0, 0.5 (4)	31.0, 1.5 (4)
Marie-Galante	M	125 (1)	97 (1)	17.6, 0.0 (2)	29.6, 0.7 (2)	
	F	—	—	—	—	
<i>M. f. hypenemus</i>		M	125, 0.5 (5)	99, 3.0 (7)	18.5, 0.7 (6)	30.1, 0.5 (6)
<i>M. f. hypenemus</i>		F	125, 1.5 (5)	102, 5.4 (6)	18.4, 1.1 (6)	30.2, 0.7 (6)
<i>M. f. fuscus</i>	Dominica	M	119, 2.7 (31)	93, 3.2 (27)	17.3, 0.8 (29)	29.0, 1.1 (29)
		F	117, 4.8 (19)	92, 5.3 (16)	17.6, 0.8 (16)	29.0, 1.5 (16)
	Martinique	M	117, 4.0 (5)	89, 5.0 (6)	17.3, 1.1 (4)	28.0, 1.3 (6)
		F	115, 4.8 (7)	90, 5.4 (6)	18.0, 1.0 (7)	29.0, 1.3 (5)
	Grenada	M	115, 2.4 (6)	86, 3.5 (6)	17.0, 0.9 (6)	27.9, 1.5 (6)
		F	116, 2.4 (5)	84, 2.3 (3)	17.1, 0.6 (5)	28.4, 0.6 (6)
<i>M. f. fuscus</i>		M	117, 2.0 (3)	89, 3.5 (3)	17.2, 0.2 (3)	28.3, 0.6 (3)
<i>M. f. fuscus</i>		F	116, 1.0 (3)	89, 4.2 (3)	17.5, 0.5 (3)	28.7, 0.6 (3)
<i>M. f. schwartzi</i>	St. Lucia	M	119, 6.3 (30)	90, 5.3 (29)	19.0, 2.5 (29)	29.3, 2.0 (29)
		F	118, 6.1 (9)	91, 7.0 (9)	19.3, 3.0 (9)	29.0, 3.4 (8)
<i>M. f. vincenti</i>	St. Vincent	M	120, 3.3 (8)	91, 3.0 (8)	17.0, 1.0 (9)	29.3, 1.2 (9)
		F	116, 4.1 (12)	90, 3.0 (11)	17.6, 0.5 (12)	30.0, 1.5 (13)
<i>M. f. atlanticus</i>	Barbados	M	122 (1)	98 (1)	15.3 (1)	30.6 (1)
		F	118 (1)	95 (1)	16.9 (1)	30.0 (1)

appropriately be placed with the nominate subspecies, the other three measures (culmen, tail, tarsus) were closer to *M. f. hypenemus* than *M. f. fuscus* (Table 2). Geographically, the Antigua population is surrounded by populations of *M. f. hypenemus*. The Antigua population should be investigated further to see if it is taxonomically distinct.

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